

An old Tombstone in Pahang.

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(With two plates.)

In May, 1910, His Highness the Tungku Besar of Pahang was visiting Kuala Lipis, and among the presents brought to him by the local Penghulus was a gravestone which was reported to have been found some time previously in the Pahang River near the Penghulu's landing stage at Tebing Tinggi. The stone was carved with an inscription in Arabic characters which baffled the local scholars. A transcription of it was subsequently made by the Mufti at Pekan, Haji Osman bin Senik. It proved of great interest, as the stone was the gravestone of Raja Fatimah who died in A. H. 901. *i. e.* A. D. 1496 or fifteen years before Albuquerque captured Malacca. I propose to give a description of the stone which now lies in the Istana of His Highness at Pekan, and to discuss the identity of Raja Fatimah.

The plates which accompany this paper show the shape of the stone. Its height from its top to the bottom of the carved foot is $22\frac{3}{4}$ inches; its width across the carved foot 14 inches, and across the face $9\frac{1}{4}$ inches; its thickness in the thinner portion 5 inches.

The following description has been given me by Mr. J. B. Scrivenor, Government Geologist, Federated Malay States, of a chip from the bottom of it :—

“This is an excellent example of a basic lava. The base is cloudy but is evidently composed to a large extent of felspar micro-liths. The felspar phenocrysts are fresh and beautifully zoned in some cases. The extinction angles are not very high and point to the felspar being andesine. Augite, almost colourless in section, is common and there is a deep brown, strongly pleochroic mineral with nearly straight extinction that occurs chiefly in prisms with strongly marked black resorption borders. This mineral is most probably basaltic hornblende, but it cannot be proved from this slide. There is one large crystal of biotite much altered.”

“It would be interesting to compare this rock with the grave-stones in the Raffles Museum, Singapore. They appeared to me to be of the same nature.”

“This rock, which may be called pyroxene-hornblende-andesite, might have come from some outcrop of the Pahang Volcanic Series, but I do not remember seeing anything exactly like it.”

May, 1910.

J. B. S.

The carving on the stone is surprisingly fresh, and as patches of "jadam" or black varnish still remain visible on the stone itself—they are clearly shown in the photographs—it is probable that the story that it was found in the river is correct. It is in much better preservation than many stones of much more recent date. It appears likely that the whole stone was once covered with black varnish and very possibly the name on it was picked out in gold.

The photographs show:—

- A. The whole stone; B. One flat side; C. The opposite flat side; D. One narrow side.

The transcription of the inscriptions as given by our local authority at Pekan is as follows:—

- (i) B. The heart-shaped inscription above:—

Al ghafur, meaning The Lord most forgiving.

The inscription below:—"Al-hejrat al-nabi salla Allahu alaihi wa's-salam sembilan ratus sa tahun lima belas hari."

- (ii) C. The heart-shaped inscription above:—

Al-jalil meaning The Lord most great.

The inscription below:—bulan shawal malam isnin Raja Fatimah kembali ka-rahmat Allah.

The translation of the two inscriptions is:—

On the eve of Monday the fifteenth day of the Moon Shawal in the year 901 of the Hejira of the Prophet, to whom may God give peace, Raja Fatimah returned to God's mercy.

- (iii) D. The heart-shaped inscription above:—

Al'ala, meaning The Lord most high.

The inscription below:—Arabic words meaning Death is a gate and all men go in thereat.

- (iv) On the other narrow side:—

The heart-shaped inscription above:—

Al-aziz, meaning The Lord most powerful.

The inscription below:—Arabic words meaning Death is a cup and all men drink thereof.

- (v) On the flat top of the stone:—

Arabic words the meaning of which has not been clearly made out.

The identity of this Raja Fatimah is fairly certain, although the early history of Pahang is not clear. The authorities are the *Séjarah Malayu* and the *Bustānu-al-Salatīn*, of an extract from which His Highness possesses a copy. According to the *Séjarah Malayu* (Shellabear's Romanised Edition, 1910, pages 82-86) Pahang with its capital Pura, *i. e.* the city, *i. e.* Pekan, was at one time under the rule of "Siam" and was governed by Maharaja Dewa Sura who belonged to the family of the ruler of that country. This "Siam" was probably not the present Thai Kingdom. It had previously sent an abortive expedition against Malacca which would appear to have followed the well-known route down the Tembeling and the Pahang and up the Bera and Serting over the 'Penarekan' to the Muar.

In reply, Sultan Mansur, who, according to Mr. Wilkinson's "History" pamphlet, 1908, page 24, came to the throne about A.D. 1459, sent a naval expedition against Pahang which captured the country and its ruler as well as the ruler's daughter, Puteri Wanang Séri, whom the Sultan subsequently married. By this marriage he had two sons, Raja Ahmad Muhammad and Raja Muhammad. Raja Ahmad Muhammad was the Sultan's favourite of all his sons and was nominated as his heir. He lost favour, however, owing to the murder by his followers of a son of the Bëndahara who, when playing "raga," had inadvertently so kicked the ball that it knocked off the Raja's head-dress. The Sultan accordingly banished him to his mother's country of Pahang, of which he had him installed as Sultan, under the title of Sultan Muhammad. The new Sultan married the grand-daughter of the Raja of Kelantan and had three sons, Raja Ahmad, Raja Jamil, and Raja Mahmud, and a daughter who married her cousin Sultan Mahmud of Malacca—the Sultan whom Albuquerque ejected in 1511. According to the *Bustanu-al-Salatin*, Sultan Muhammad was succeeded by his son Sultan Ahmad, who by a non-royal wife had a son Raja Mansur. The Sultan abdicated in favour of this son who married Raja Fatimah the daughter of Sultan Ala'edin Riayat Shah of Malacca who was the son of Sultan Mansur and the father of the Sultan Mahmud just mentioned. I believe that the gravestone found is that of this lady.

She would appear to have had an unhappy time in Pahang as her husband died without children being "murdered by all his warriors."

His uncle Raja Jamil succeeded and was rapidly followed by the other uncle Raja Mahmud who contrived to establish himself on the throne. He seems to have married a cousin, the daughter of his uncle Raja Muhammad, and his daughter married Sultan Ala'edin Shah of Malacca, Sultan Mahmud's successor.

Apparently civil war followed on the death of the first Sultan of Pahang. The omission in the *Séjarah Malayu* of any reference to the murder of Raja Mansur might be ascribed to the author's theory that "Malays never rebel," but other inconsistencies between his account and the detailed genealogy of the *Bustanu-al-Salatin* must be ascribed to inaccurate information and confusion between rulers of different generations who bore the same or similar names.

Tëbing Tinggi, the place where this stone was found, is not known to have been a residence of royalty, but it is not far above Lubok Pëlang to which, according to the *Séjarah Malayu*, Sultan Abduljamal of Pahang retired after his abdication, and where he is said to have died.

As far as I am aware, this stone is the oldest dated gravestone in the Peninsula.



OLD TOMBSTONES, PAHANG.



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